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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
---------- 095041
R 111204Z JUL 74
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9905
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 5425

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS CINCPAC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, LA
SUBJECT: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT

1. I MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT FOR OVER AN HOUR ON JULY 11. I OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING THE U.S. CONTINUING STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND OUR DESIRE TO SEE LAOS ACHIEVE THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IT SOUGHT. WE FULLY SUPPORTED THE CONCEPT OF A FREE, INDEPENDENT AND PROSPEROUS LAOS. I TOLD PHOUMI THAT I WISHED TO BRING TO HIS ATTENTION HOWEVER THE CONCERN WHICH WAS FELT IN WASHINGTON WITH REGARD TO THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF NVA FORCES IN LAOS, THE REFUSAL OF THE PATHET LAO TO RETURN POW EMMET KAY, THE TONE AND CONTENT OF PATHET LAO PROPAGANDA AND THE ILLEGAL DETENTION OF ROBERT GIBSON. THESE WERE SERIOUS MATTERS AND ALTHOUGH OUR POLICY WAS CLEAR AND FORTHRIGHT I VERY MUCH HOPED THAT WE COULD WORK TOGETHER TO ELIMINATE THESE PROBLEMS WHICH MIGHT WELL AFFECT OUR RELATIONS.

2. I THEN REFERRED TO THE CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD WITH CHARGE CHAPMAN REGARDING A MEETING OF FAR SENIOR OFFICERS AT SAVANNAKHET AT WHICH COUP PLOTTING HAD TAKEN PLACE. THIS GROUP HAD INDEED DISCUSSED POLITICAL

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MATTERS BUT HAD NOT RPT NOT BEEN PLOTTING A COUP OR

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PLANNING ACTION AGAINST THE PGNU.

3. PHOUMI THANKED ME FOR MY CANDID STATEMENT. HE
THEN REPEATED, AS HE HAS AT EACH OF OUR MEETINGS,
THE LITANY OF PATHET LAO SUSPICIONS WITH REGARD TO
AMERICAN ACTIVITY HERE. HE SAID THAT HE CONTINUED
TO GET REPORTS REGARDING AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN
MEETINGS WITH DISGRUNTLED MEMBERS OF THE VIENTIANE
SIDE WHO WISHED TO SEE THE COALITION GOVERNMENT FAIL.
I REPLIED THAT THE REPORTS WHICH HAD BEEN QUOTED IN
PATHET LAO PROPANGANDA WERE "FANTASIES;" FOR EXAMPLE,
NO AMERICAN GENERALS HAD PARTICIPATED IN A RECENT
FAR MEETING AT SAVANNAKHET NOR WERE THERE TWO BATTALIONS
OF THAIS WITH AMERICAN OFFICERS IN THE PAKSE AREA.
PHOUMI DID NOT CONTEST THESE FACTS BUT REPEATED THAT
HE HOPED THAT I WOULD USE MY INFLUENCE TO CALM DOWN
THOSE MEMBERS OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE WHO MIGHT BE
ATTEMPTING TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT.

4. HE SAID THAT HIS REPORTS DID NOT ALLEGE U.S.
MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THESE MEETINGS BUT THAT THE
CIA MIGHT WELL BE INVOLVED. PHOUMI THEN WENT INTO
A LONG DESCRIPTION OF THE DELAYS THE JCCIA IS
ENCOUNTERING IN PLANTING STAKES TO ESTABLISH
THE CEASE-FIRE LINE. HE COMPLAINED OF THE SHORTAGE
OF HELICOPTERS TO ASSIST THE JCCIA IN CARRYING OUT
ITS MISSION AND ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER THE U.S.
COULD ASSIST IN THIS REGARD. HE THEN WENT ON TO
AFFIRM THAT THE QUESTION OF POW'S AND MIA'S WOULD
BE RESOLVED ONCE THE CEASE-FIRE LINE HAD BEEN
ESTABLISHED.

5. PHOUMI, WHO APPEARED VERY RELAXED AND UNHURRIED,
THEN DISCOURSED FOR NEARLY HALF AN HOUR ON HIS VIEWS
REGARDING THE MORAL PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD GUIDE
MANKIND. QUOTING FREQUENTLY FROM BUDDHA, HE EXTOLLED
THE VIRTUES OF HONESTY, THRIFT, HARD WORK, PATIENCE
AND POLITINESS. I ECHOED THESE SENTIMENTS QUOTING
FROM SCRIPTURE.
WHITEHOUSE
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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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